The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and official pronouncements of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

Entered as second-class matter September 30, 1912, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of August 24, 1912. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Sec. 1766, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized July 12, 1918.

SAVE FOOD—Help Relieve Famine Abroad

WHOLE NO. 1831 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 14, 1946 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 36, NO. 20

AFL Asks Senate To Kill Pending Anti-Labor Bills

Washington, D. C.—In the midst of Senate debate on anti-strike legislation, AFL President William Green tossed a final appeal for reason and restraint. He urged defeat of all pending bills to restrict labor's freedom.

Obviously referring to the coming election campaigns, Mr. Green said in his letter to all Senators that enactment of anti-union legislation "would be gravely resented by laboring men and women everywhere and all their friends."

This warning came as the Senate prepared to act on the vicious Case Bill, which was adopted by the House of Representatives, and the milder substitute drafted by the Senate's Education and Labor Committee.

Anti-labor forces in the Senate were seeking to take advantage of the hate propaganda which reached its crest during the coal strike to push through stringent amendments crippling the right to strike and severely regulating organized labor.

All labor, including unions with perfect records of cooperation during the war, would be affected and penalized by such legislation, Mr. Green pointed out in his letter. He also called attention to the fact that employer organizations like the National Association of Manufacturers, which has constantly sought to destroy trade unions, are backing the new legislative assault on American workers' rights.

Miners Win Back Pay For Holidays, Now Demand $70 Million Health Fund

Washington, D. C.—With coal mining resumed under a temporary truce and the emergency coal shortage alleviated for the time being, negotiations between the United Mine Workers of America and the bituminous operators for a new contract began to make definite progress.

John L. Lewis, president of the UMW, won the first round when the coal operators agreed to pay the miners a total of about $6,000,000 in back pay for holidays already worked. The union insisted that this money representing overtime instead of straight time, be paid before other issues could be considered.

At his next step, Mr. Lewis proposed that the health and welfare fund proposed by the union to care for miners injured in occupational accidents and to provide for the widows and children of miners killed in such accidents, be financed by a 7 percent tax on payrolls, to be contributed wholly by the employers.

This levy would amount to 70 million dollars a year, according to newspaper estimates.

The union move took the press by surprise, because hitherto all published reports indicated that Mr. Lewis was demanding a 10-cent royalty on each ton of coal mined.

The conferees apparently have not yet discussed how the health and welfare fund would be administered. It is expected that the coal operators will reject the union's proposal and offer a much lower figure.

This issue must be cleared out of the way and compliance of the coal mines with better safety regulations must be assured, before the UMW representatives will agree to discuss the final problems of higher wages and shorter hours.

Special Federal Mediator McGrady and Conciliator Fuller appeared gratified by the progress made in the negotiations but were extremely doubtful whether all controversies can be resolved and a new contract agreed upon in time to meet the deadline set by President Truman.

The union, accepting the $3,000,000 holiday pay bonus as a "just debt long overdue," declared the money had been honestly earned and that now, since the concession had been made by the operators, it was prepared to go forward in an orderly manner to settle the other issues through collective bargaining.

The press conference in Asheville, N. C., AFL President William Green and newspapermen that the Federation without reservation, will give Mr. Lewis and the mine workers a full and complete measure of support."

Congress Sends President $400 P.O. Pay Raise Bill

Washington, D. C.—Unanimous passage by the Senate of the House-approved bill giving some 400,000 postal workers a flat $400 salary increase, sent the measure to the White House for President Truman's signature.

In addition to the annual raise, the legislation provides 20 cents per hour boost for daily or hourly employees and a 20 per cent jump in pay for fourth-class postmasters.

It will be retroactive to January 1, will add an estimated $162,000,000 to the basic $712,000,000 payroll of the Post Office and amount to an average 17.6 per cent increase for the service as a whole.

The salary increase is the first overhead cost of living and to make up for the loss of take-home pay caused by the elimination of overtime. Average pay of postal workers before passage of the bill was estimated at $2,300 a year.

Unanimous Senate approval of the salary increase came as no surprise, as it encountered no opposition in committee. Earlier it had been approved by the House overwhelmingly, only six voting "noes."

Commenting on the action of Congress approving the legislation, President Leo E. George of the National Federation of Post Office Clerks (AFL), said:

"Enactment of the Bureh-Mead bill to provide a horizontal increase of $400 per year to all postal employes, is an act of retarded justice to employes of the United States Government whose service is universally recognized as efficient and dependable under any and all adverse conditions.

"The regard in which their service is held is best illustrated by the fact that in the entire Senate and House of Representatives, only one vote was registered in opposition to the measure.

"The result could not have been attained, however, without the fine support given by many members of the House of Representatives who sponsored the legislation in the two Houses of Congress and Representative Crawford of Michigan whose bill was eventually incorporated into the final draft and the public support given by the co-operation of the seven million members of the American Federation of Labor."

JOBLESS RIGHTS OF VETS CLARIFIED BY GOVERNMENT

Washington, D. C.—Veterans who take temporary jobs retain their rights to unemployment allowances after they are released, it was announced by the Veterans Administration in an attempt to clarify an apparent misunderstanding among some former servicemen regarding unemployment benefits.

Veterans are not required to claim unemployment compensation during the following their discharge from the armed services in order to protect their rights to benefits, the agency said.

ILO DELEGATES MEETING ON 17-POINT AGENDA

Montreal.—Delegates to the two-weeks session of the International Labor Organization here to conferees here on matters covering a 17-point agenda. Following the meetings here, the delegation will head for New York to negotiate the terms of the ILO's relationship with the United Nations Organization.

Robert J. Watt, AFL international representative, is representing the AFL at the sessions. Other delegates include U. S. government representatives, employer delegates and labor leaders of management from many nations.

Say, Listen!

Forthcoming radio programs in the "Great Section—AFL" series broadcast each Saturday at 2:45 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, over the nation-wide Columbia Broadcasting System, are listed below for the information of unionists everywhere so that they can make advance plans to tune in:

May 18—Garment Trades. Members of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union will tell a graphic story of how union organization has benefited workers in the industry.

May 25—Report from the Border. George Googe, AFL Regional Director, and David Lilienthal, TVA chairman, will describe the advances won by AFL organization of southern workers.

June 1—Teamsters. Members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters who operate coast-to-coast trucks in the mid-west area will be interviewed from a remote installation.

"Nothing Can Stop Us In South," Green Proclaims; AFL Unions To "Lend-Lease" Organizing Aid

Officials Promise Full Assistance to Drive as Conference Adopts Key Policies And Charts Great Goals

Asheville, N. C.—The Southern Labor Conference proposed that AFL national and international unions lend-lease organizing assistance to the new drive to unionize the unorganized workers of Dixie. Immediate assurances of such aid were given by high-ranking union officials.

"Our victory will be the victory of all labor and the nation," said a unanimously adopted resolution. Whatever you lend us will come back to you many-fold."

To translate the large masses of unorganized southern workers calls for redoubled efforts on the part of established AFL unions in that territory and "unity and singleness of purpose by the entire trade-union movement," the conference emphasized.

"It imposes an obligation on every national and international union and every local and state body of the American Federation of Labor to assist freely and generously."

These specific steps were urged:

1. That the AFL Executive Council authorize President Green to appoint a coordinator for the organizing drive, so that all elements in the Federation work as a team.

2. That organizing efforts be concentrated first in fields where unionization has lagged, such as textiles, lumber, chemicals, garment trades, public employes, service trades and white collar employes.

3. That state-wide and city campaigns be directed by the state federations and city central bodies and that special organizing committees be named to take charge in communities where no central labor council exists.

The conference adopted a clear-cut statement of principles to guide the campaign, a brief summary of the organizing drive.

The AFL's first goal in the South will be to raise living standards, declared the delegates. It will seek expansion of industry in the South to create more jobs. Through collective bargaining and the negotiating of contracts the AFL will aim for labor and peace in the South and union-management cooperation. By increasing the purchasing power of the workers it will provide better markets for the products of southern farms and factories.

Besides these economic goals the conference set its course on the firm path of American democracy, rejecting any and all alien isms.

Affirming the AFL's nonpartisan political policy, the conference announced these political objectives:

"As believers in self-government we resent invasion from other communities to direct our use of our votes. As well as our economic power. As free workers, we must accept responsibility for our own lives and hence make our own decisions.

"Members of the American Federation of Labor years ago led a movement to open the ballot boxes of the South to all citizens when we marched the Negro-manned longshoremen of Savannah to vote in the primary elections. Organized labor will make this right to vote effective in all Southern States."

The conference adopted a legislative program calling for wider social security, a federal unemployment insurance law, national health insurance, a federal employment service, a strong emergency housing program for veterans, federal aid for education, higher minimum wage standards, pay increases for government workers, and state labor relations laws patterned after the Wagner Act.

Sen. Morse Raps Ball Bill and Economic Reactionaries

Asheville, N. C.—America and all it stands for can be saved only by honest liberalism, Senator Wayne B. Morse, of Oregon, told the Southern Labor Conference in a hard-hitting speech.

Senator Morse did not spare his punches. He landed a haymaker on the collapsed nose of Senator Joseph Ball, of Minnesota, for turning from the liberal path, opposing such vital labor legislation as improvement of minimum wage standards and for sponsoring the anti-labor Ball-Burton-Hatch bill.

In the same frank spirit, Senator Morse branded as reactionaries those who are trying to destroy the AFL by claiming that the will of the majority in frequently circumvented by legislative tricks and filibusters, by the fact that legislation is bottled up in committees, and that the efficiency of congressional committees is thwarted by the seniority system.

Turning on reactionary business leaders, Senator Morse condemned Robert W. Wason, new president of the National Association of Manufacturers, who is leading a fight to destroy OPA and to hamper unions with anti-labor legislation.

"The doctrine of economic reaction is bringing us to the brink of disaster," said the Senator, "is selling American business men short and playing into the hands of the leftists."

In discussing the pending minimum wage bill, of immense importance to southern workers, the Senator said:

"Some in the Senate, such as Senator Ball, are trying to kill us that if we stand for great advances in social legislation we are not liberals but reactionaries. I say that the Ball-Burton-Hatch bill is authoritarian.

"One of the major functions of a democratic government is to protect the economically weak from the excesses of the economically strong. That is the objective of the minimum wage bill."

The Senator conceded that Congress is in a mood now to pass some form of anti-labor legislation, but he warned that such legislation "will create more labor trouble than it will prevent."

The conference gave the Senator a rousing ovation when he concluded, and Chairman George Googe declared he would like to see a new coalition in Congress—a coalition between southern Democrats and liberal Republicans from the North, like Morse.

Truman Signs Bill For 3,060 Airports

Washington, D. C.—President Truman signed a bill under which $500,000,000 will be spent by the Federal Government in the next six years for construction of 3,000 new airports throughout the Nation. The program will give the United States an airport system "the like of which the world has ever seen."

The vast fund will be used to help the Civil Aeronautics Authority meet desires to build an airfield and is willing and able to put up half the funds needed.

The Federal program will be administered by the Civil Aeronautics Administration, which will channel the funds primarily to small fields suitable for state flying and feeder air lines.

The money will be apportioned to the States according to area and population. From this it is believed the bulk of the funds will be allocated to Texas, California, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois and Ohio.

Not more than $100,000,000 of the Federal fund can be spent in any one year. The law requires the CAA to draw up a national airport development program, to be revised each year.

TEACHERS ORGANIZE

Denver, Col.—A Colorado Federation of Teachers (AFL) was organized here and expects to have 10 to 12 locals by summer. It will seek reorganization of the nearly 3,000 school districts in the State, an adequate minimum salary and higher standards for teachers.

Hicks Body Strike Won by AFL Union

Lebanon, Ind.—The six-months-old strike at the Hicks Body Co. here was settled when members of the local Federal Union (AFL) voted to accept a contract providing for a closed shop, check-off, 18½-cent hourly increase, improvements in the vacation plan and a complete seniority clause demanded by the union.

Hugh Gormley, AFL regional director, announcing acceptance of the terms, said he regarded the capitulation by the company as a signal victory for the union after one of the most prolonged and hardest-fought struggles by organized labor in that state.

"We received the wholehearted support, both morally and financially, of the State Federation of Labor, the Central Labor Union, Building Trades of Indiana and Teamsters' locals in Indiana and other states, which helped bring this victory about," he said.

"I want to thank you for your support and guidance and I know that you are just as pleased to have this matter settled as are we," he wrote to AFL President William Green.

AFL AGENT ON BOARD

Madison, Wis.—Henry C. Bunz, business representative of the Electrical Union (AFL) in the Eau Claire district, was named by Gov. Goodland to be a member of the State Employment Relations Board to fill the unexpired term of the late R. Floyd Green of La Crosse. He will serve until May 12, 1947.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL TO BACK DIXIE DRIVE

Asheville, N. C.—The AFL Executive Council will receive a full report on the Southern Labor Conference and will be asked to extend financial and organizing assistance to the drive for a million new AFL members launched here.

This was announced by President William Green at a press conference and later reiterated by him in a farewell talk to the delegates.

"I'm expecting great things from you," Mr. Green told them in parting. "You can expect effective help from us. This is a job that requires teamwork. If we use teamwork and exert our greatest efforts, a year from now we can celebrate the greatest organizing victory in the annals of the trade-union movement."

WYATT GRATEFUL TO AFL LEADERS

Asheville, N. C.—Deep appreciation for the vigorous cooperation demonstrated by the AFL in the Veterans' Emergency Housing Program was expressed by Emergency Housing Expediter Wilson W. Wyatt in an address before the AFL Southern Conference here.

Decrying efforts in some quarters to block the program, Wyatt said the program "some sort of nonsense cooked up in Washington." Mr. Wyatt cited a letter addressed to President Truman by AFL President William Green and Frank Fenton, Chairman of the AFL Housing Committee, which said in part:

"Mr. Wyatt's program requests that we do what seems to be impossible. The records show that we did what seemed to be impossible when we were fighting to win the war. Organized labor shares unstintingly with others in the all-out effort to reach and surpass what seemed to be unattainable goals. Please be assured that we will do what seems to be impossible again to meet the gravest emergency of peace."

Expressing confidence that the goal of starting construction on 2,000,000 houses and apartments can be begun within the next two years with the cooperation of the AFL, Wyatt told the meeting of AFL southern leaders:

"We are counting on business to lick the building materials shortage, aided by intelligent help by labor. We are counting on you in organized labor to see to it that enough workers are trained or recruited and ready for the houses as the material becomes available.

"There are now about 650,000 workers employed both in off-site activity in materials production and distribution and on-site in actual construction of homes. To meet our goal a peak of 2,150,000 workers will have to be on the job."

VETERANS' HOUSING BILL APPROVED BY CONGRESS

Washington, D. C.—Unanimous Senate approval completed Congressional action on the Wyatt housing program to erect 2,700,000 homes for veterans in the next 3 years. Earlier the House approved the measure by a vote of 298 to 71.

The legislation provides $400,000,000 of the $600,000,000 requested to subsidize the production of scarce building materials. This action was reported strongly supported by the AFL.

May 31 is the deadline in the bill to include premium payments or subsidies to top extra sources of production of scarce materials; guarantees to manufacturers of new types of housing that, if they are unable to sell their full output the Government will dispose of any surplus; price ceilings; special Government financing of rental housing and revival of Title VI, and priorities for veterans. The act will run until Dec. 31, 1947.

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT RISES IN NEW YORK STATE

Albany, N. Y.—Employment in construction firms in New York State rose 11 percent in March over February and 11 percent and man-hours climbed 10.1 percent in the industry, Industrial Commissioner Edward Corsi reported. Employment was 61 percent above that of March, 1945.

Average weekly earnings in the construction industry in March were $58.97, compared with $56.94 for February. Favorable weather contributed greatly to the gains, the report said.

Delegates Cheer AFL Leader's Rousing Pledge To Organize Million New Members And Raise Their Wages

Asheville, N. C.—Three thousand cheering delegates to the Southern Labor Conference jumped to their feet and gave AFL President William Green a spontaneous pledge of victory in the million-member organizing drive launched here.

This climactic demonstration came at the close of Mr. Green's rousing address, in which he emphasized that neither reactionary employers nor CIO Communists can stop the AFL campaign to enroll unorganized southern workers, raise their wages and living standards and fortify their political power.

"Let me give the workers of the South this solemn assurance," the AFL leader declared. "When you organize into AFL unions you will be promoting your own interests and you will run your own affairs.

"Let me give southern industry this warning—grow and cooperate with us or fight for your life against Communist forces.

"Let me give the people of the South this pledge—the unions of the AFL are not out to destroy you but to brine better and more prosperous times to the South.

"Nothing can stop us, neither the opposition of reactionary management nor the rivalry of the Communistic dual movement."

Mr. Green's address was the climax of the entire session, but some miscreant cut the NBC wires in the basement of the city auditorium just as the program was going on the air. However, a master recording was made, and radio stations throughout the South will be asked to rebroadcast the address in the interests of free speech. Police are investigating the crime.

Unaware of the reprehensible sabotage, the packed audience in the city auditorium hung on Mr. Green's fighting words and burst into frequent applause as he scored hits against the rival CIO.

"With its usual flair for sensationalism," he said of the CIO, "it announced recently its intention of making the South a political battleground this year. That approach didn't go over. It aroused more resentment than support. So now the dual movement has changed its tune. Now it proclaims a rival organizing campaign in the South.

"The workers of the South will not be misled by this sudden and transparent reversal of policy any more than the American people were fooled by the complete change in the Communist Party line overnight.

"The weather vane of the dual movement swings to the right or to the left, whichever way the wind from Moscow blows. As far as their efforts in the South are concerned, I predict that though they may invade you today they will be gone with the wind tomorrow."

The AFL, on the other hand, has a firmly established organizing campaign in the South, Mr. Green pointed out, with 1,800,000 members who have already fought and won the initial battle for recognition.

"I predict that before another year has passed your organizing drive will have added another million new members to our ranks," he declared.

"Our purpose is to raise the standards of living of the millions of southern workers and create a new era of lasting prosperity in the land of Dixie.

"Make no mistake about it—this is an undertaking of southern labor, by southern labor, and for southern labor."

The great weakness of the southern economy today is its low wage standard, Mr. Green said.

"Trying to maintain industry and agriculture without high purchasing power," he continued, "is like attempting to operate an automobile without fuel. It just can't be done.

"Therefore, we are determined to raise wages in the South. We don't want high wages in the North and lower differentials in the South. The American standard of living is the only standard of living which the AFL will accept in the South."

South Welcomes AFL Drive, Atlanta Editor Declares

Asheville, N. C.—The "great majority" of the Southern people are not anti-labor, declared Ralph McGill, editor of the Atlanta Constitution, assured the Southern Labor Conference.

He said the South would hail the AFL's organizing drive if it succeeded in wiping out lower wage differential which he termed "one of the curses of the South." This is one of the AFL's outstanding goals.

"The South expects you also to give the Negro worker a break," the Georgia editor declared to the applause of the delegates.

Gerard D. Reilly, member of the National Labor Relations Board, told the conference that employers who respect labor's rights enjoy the best labor relations.

John Connors, head of the Workers' Education Bureau, promised renewed efforts to spur educational drives in the South in conjunction with the AFL's organizing campaign.

D. G. Garland, a Negro organizer for the AFL, told the conference of the great progress made in the organizing and living conditions of Negroes who joined AFL unions and scoffed at CIO attempts to lure Negro workers to their camp.

I. M. Ornburn, Secretary-Treasurer of the Union Label Trades Department, stressed the importance of patronizing union services and buying union-made goods in building up a strong organized labor movement.

John P. Frey, veteran President of the AFL Metal Trades Department, sounded a keynote of the sessions when he told union delegates out of his life-time experience. Emphasizing that trade unions are made up of workers of all races, religious and political persuasions, he warned that the quickest way to break up a local union is to let racial, religious and political issues become a battleground of debate at meetings.

James R. Burns, President of the American Federation of Government Employes, pledged a strong organizing drive among Federal employes stationed in the South.

Frank P. Fenton, AFL National Director of Organization, gave a rousing address to the delegates. He told them that the success of the organizing campaign hinged primarily on their own efforts, rather than on outside help.

Michael Widman, of the United Mine Workers, was given enthusiastic applause when he urged united labor support for the coal miners' strike and when he cheered the leaders of the rival CIO organizing campaign in the South.

Joseph P. McCurdy, President of the United Garment Workers, declared his union would keep its organizing campaign going at full blast until every garment worker in the South joined the union.

RAILROAD NON-OPERATORS BEGIN VOTING ON STRIKE

Chicago.—Railroad workers numbering more than 1,100,000 began voting on a Nation-wide strike to support demands for 4 pay raise. Those participating include personnel who do not operate trains but are craft workers, telegraphers, clerks, yard hands and similar employes in all crafts.

B. M. Jewell, chairman of the Unions' Conference Committee, estimated the poll will be completed by June 20.

The issue centers about the unions' demand for a 14-cent-an-hour pay increase. An arbitration board which studied the workers' request for a 30-cent increase in March awarded them 16 cents, which Jewell branded "wholly inadequate."

AFL CHALKS UP VICTORIES IN TWO VIRGINIA PLANTS

Richmond, Va.—Victories scored by the AFL in two Virginia communities, Portsmouth and Orange, were reported by Paul J. Smith, regional director.

In the plant of Snead & Co., Orange, in an NLRB election, the workers voted as follows: For AFL, 74 votes; for CIO, 8 votes; for no union, 6 votes.

A contest between the AFL and a "no-union" group in the plant of Isaac Fass, Inc., Portsmouth, showed 73 workers for the AFL, 7 for no union and 30 challenged by the company.

The campaign in Orange was directed by Organizer J. A. Garnett and that in Portsmouth by Organizer David Alston.

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AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

SUPPLEMENT

WRITE OR WIRE YOUR SENATORS TO SAVE OPA

WILLIAM GREEN, President — WASHINGTON, D. C., FRIDAY, MAY 17, 1946 — GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer

Government Seizure Hinted In Coal, Railroad Crises

Truman May Act To Break Deadlock As Arbitration Is Rejected

Washington, D. C.—With the soft coal and railroad disputes reaching a crisis stage, President Truman announced he was ready to employ Government seizure as a last resort.

The new coal climax was precipitated when the mine operators arbitrarily rejected the United Mine Workers' proposal for a health and welfare fund to be financed by an employer contribution equal to seven percent of gross payrolls.

The President then summoned Charles O'Neil, spokesman for the coal operators and UMW President John L. Lewis to a series of White House conferences. Both sides refused a Presidential proposal for arbitration of the dispute.

While coal is still being mined under a two-week truce arranged by the UMW to protect the nation against an emergency coal famine, the President indicated that unless definite settlement is agreed upon before the truce expires, the Government may take over the mines.

Mr. Truman was more explicit in connection with the nation-wide railroad dispute between management and the operating unions. He said flatly the Government would take over the railroads in the event no agreement is reached before the strike deadline.

Meanwhile, chiefs of the non-operating railroad unions, affiliated with the AFL, were distributing a strike ballot among their members because of the refusal of the railroads to accept green wage adjustments.

Following the first series of White House conferences, Mr. Lewis appeared before the AFL Executive Council to report on the issues in the coal controversy. He had been unable to attend earlier Council sessions because of the urgency of the negotiations.

Mr. Lewis made it clear in a public statement that the union insists on the establishment of a satisfactory health and welfare fund for coal miners under the union's administration as a condition precedent to any discussion of wage and hour adjustments in the new contract.

He flatly denied newspaper reports that the annual sum to be raised by the seven percent employer contribution would aggregate anything like the $70,000,000 sum estimated by the coal operators.

In their reply, the coal operators flatly refused to consider Mr. Lewis' proposal and declared that they would go no further then to agree on an inquiry into the need for better safety and hospitalization conditions for the coal miners. The union, of course, would not agree to this delaying tactic.

The President's arbitration plan was rejected by the coal operators who said they could not agree to submit the union demand for a health and welfare fund to arbitration. When the union also turned down the arbitration plan, the President and his advisers immediately began exploring the possibilities of Government seizure and operation of the mines to assure continued production after the current truce expires on May 26.

Hotel Union Shows Health Fund Value

New York City.—Value of health and life insurance for members of the union movement was emphasized in the first report of the New York Hotel Trades Council (AFL) on operation of such a fund set up under the collective agreement between the union and the New York City Hotel Association.

The fund, which is financed through a 3 percent payroll tax paid by the employers, is administered by a board of six trustees, all officers of the union, with an advisory committee consisting of nine hotel executives. In its first year employer contributions totaled $1,540,000 and $448,229 was paid out in benefits to workers and their families.

In a foreword to the report Jay Rubin, president of the union and chairman of the board of trustees of the insurance fund, said it had become a stabilizing force in the hotel industry and had served to eliminate "cut-throat" competition, to improve and raise the standard of service to the public.

Included among the benefits paid out through the fund were $139,000 in life insurance, $176,888 in hospitalization, $10,000 in payments for accidental death and dismemberment, and $123,420 in weekly accident and sickness benefits. Of these receiving hospitalization, 55 percent were members, 19 percent were wives or husbands of members, and 17 percent were children of members.

Lewis Explains Health Fund

Washington, D. C.—The statement issued by John L. Lewis on the demand of the UMW for a health and welfare fund follows:

For weeks past the country has been led to believe through statements of operators and public representatives who had little knowledge on the subject that the mine workers had been asking for a royalty or coal. In truth, the mine workers have not in all these negotiations made such a proposal. They did in the 1945 conference, but the plan was rejected by the operators and not pressed by the mine workers.

In the 1946 conference they proposed the establishment of a welfare fund, asking its acceptance in principle by the operators, and said that the manner of raising the fund and all the details of it were negotiable questions:

The mine workers request the fund for the following six reasons:

1. To furnish adequate and modern medical service to the miners, their families and their dependent families with a choice of physicians, which in many areas, particularly in the South, they do not now have. We plan to replace the present company doctor scourge.

2. To provide adequate hospitalization under proper standards.

3. To provide insurance, life insurance and health insurance for the miners, which they cannot now purchase. Life insurance now costs the mine worker about 27½ percent because it rests people in sedentary occupations. Obviously, he cannot purchase it at that price. Obviously, he has no insurance as a result and his family is unprotected in case of death by violence in the mines or from normal causes. This fund can provide insurance on a mass basis and much more cheaply than the individual can buy it himself, even if he is capable of buying it, which he is not.

4. The fourth reason is rehabilitation. Men who are injured and disabled in the mines through the loss of limbs, blindness, or other major physical injuries, need rehabilitation. They have no place to go except to the mine workers now and there are probably a thousand of them. Many of them incapacitated from further mining through incapacity who have received no assistance in rehabilitation or training for other vocational employment.

5. The fifth reason is economic aid in distress or hardship cases. Families that become impoverished because they have not received compensation provided by the States due to the manipulation of the company insurance system and by reason of economy of the company doctor, which is not medical, but merely available because no other doctor is permitted to attend the victim. The company doctor's report, which is medical testimony, to refute the claims of the company doctor. In many cases the family's income and ability may be cut to as low as 20 percent and the family becomes impoverished. There are thousands of such cases.

6. If any money is left in the fund, we propose to use it for cultural and educational work among the mine workers.

All of these reasons were stated to the operators, together with an extensive analysis of the principle and all the details, so much so that the operators said only that they desired no further information on welfare and asked no further questions today.

We pointed out that this fund should be a charge against the cost of production and that it should be a payroll charge—in other words, that an amount equal to seven percent of the gross earnings of the men before production should be paid by the operators into the fund to be handled by the United Mine Workers of America.

We pointed out that no other agency could operate the fund as efficiently or as cheaply as the mine workers, that it could not become a charitable fund and simply another bureaucratic governmental agency with the overhead eating up a major part of the revenue of the fund, clogged with red tape and delays, as awards delayed after the manner of other governmental agencies. In passing, I refer to the War Labor Board, which has been as many as 15,000 cases behind in its schedule.

We pointed out that it is no business of the operators to supervise this fund; that the coal industry mangled these people and that the United Mine Workers want the right to alleviate their agony and distress.

We pointed out that the operators' veto power on this fund rested in the fact that at the end of each contract period they could, if they would, discontinue it by refusal to continue its payments. In that event it would be extended to the miners was necessarily limited by the contractual limitations of income that the mine workers would be constantly on trial before the public conference of the industry and before the public at large as to the manner of its administration. The mine workers would have to meet that criticism at the end of every contract period in the industry.

The mine workers pointed out that they would be glad to receive and express reasons given, which we are willing to stipulate in the contract—limitations for representation by the AFL shopcraft unions. Additional organizers will be assigned, Aten said, to bring this drive to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible date."

Headquarters will be in Altoona, from which Aten will direct activities. The campaign is expected to be the result of many and repeated appeals from Pennsylvania shopmen for representation by these bona fide AFL unions.

The Railway Employes Department of the AFL, Aten, at present has some 250 agreements with railroads and terminal companies. Shopcraft workers on every Class 1 railroad in the country, except those on the Pennsylvania, are among those covered by these agreements.

Fred W. Baer Dies; Head of Firemen

Topeka, Kans.—Fred W. Baer, for 27 years president of the International Association of Fire Fighters (AFL), died of a heart attack on the evening of May 15 at the outset of an address before a banquet of the Kansas State Association of Fire Fighters here.

Mr. Baer was born in Kansas City, Mo., August 16, 1884, and spent practically his entire life in fire fighting and fire prevention work. He served conspicuously in the interest of his organization and was tireless in his efforts to secure legislation to protect the interests of the members of the fire fighting service throughout the United States and Canada. Under his leadership the organization grew from 4,000 paid firemen to 30,000 locals with a membership of approximately 65,000.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Grace Morgan Baer, and two stepsons, Logan Earl Hammel of Washington, D. C., and Harold Kimmel, of Phoenix, Ariz.; his father, William H. Baer, and a brother, Roy B. Baer, both of Kansas City, Mo.

The body was shipped to Washington, D. C., for burial.

MARYLAND FEDERATION RE-ELECTS R. J. BUXBAUM

Cumberland, Md.—A bonus for veterans, higher income tax exemptions and a shorter work week for women were recommended at the 40th annual convention of the Maryland and District of Columbia Federation of Labor in session here.

Robert J. Buxbaum of Baltimore was re-elected president by acclamation and Frank J. Coleman of Washington was re-elected secretary.

The organization urged income tax exemptions be raised from $500 to $1,500 for both single and married persons, and asserted Maryland lags behind the Congressional and State action with regard to limiting hours of women workers to 8 a day and 48 a week.

FEDERAL JOBS DENIED TO RED CIO MEMBERS

Washington, D. C.—Lashing out vigorously at the CIO's newly formed United Public Workers' Union, the Senate Appropriations Committee voted to deny Federal employment to any person belonging to an organization which claims "the right to strike against the Government."

This provision was attached to the Agriculture Department Appropriation Bill. Senator Russell, Georgia Democrat, said similar provision will be incorporated in future appropriation bills.

All AFL unions representing Government employes renounce in their constitutions the right to strike. However, the CIO's UPWU claims the right to strike.

Commenting upon the action of the committee, Senator Russell said the CIO organization "condemned Americans and the British for imperialistic policies," indicating Communistic tendencies.

AFL TO ORGANIZE 'PENNSY' SHOPMEN

Chicago.—Plans for an intensive drive to organize shopcraft workers on the Pennsylvania Railroad were announced by the Railway Employes Department of the AFL.

The campaign will be launched at Altoona, Pa., site of the Pennsylvania's major shops, Fred N. Aten, assistant to the president of the department, said.

The Pennsylvania is the nation's largest railroad and employs more than 60,000 shop craftsmen.

The drive to bring this group into the AFL will embrace the machinists, blacksmiths, sheet metal workers (including molders), electrical workers, carmen (including coach cleaners), helpers and apprentices of these crafts, as well as powerhouse employes and railway shop laborers (represented by the Firemen and Oilers).

Ninety organizers already have been assigned to secure signed authorizations for representation by the AFL shopcraft unions. Additional organizers will be assigned, Aten said, to bring this drive to a successful conclusion at the earliest possible date."

Headquarters will be in Altoona, from which Aten will direct activities. The campaign is expected to be the result of many and repeated appeals from Pennsylvania shopmen for representation by these bona fide AFL unions.

The Railway Employes Department of the AFL, Aten, at present has some 250 agreements with railroads and terminal companies. Shopcraft workers on every Class 1 railroad in the country, except those on the Pennsylvania, are among those covered by these agreements.

CROSS SECTION--AFL

No. 6—Southern Organizing Drive

(Featuring AFL President William Green and four delegates to the AFL Southern Labor Conference at Asheville, N. C., largest labor meeting since V-J Day, interviewed by Dwight Cooke, CBS commentator.)

Asheville, N. C.—Determination of the American Federation of Labor to organize the South as a bulwark of strength for the entire labor movement of the nation was emphasized in the first report of the New York Hotel Trades Council (AFL) on operation of such a fund set up under the collective agreement between the union and the New York City Hotel Association.

The fund, which is financed through a 3 percent payroll tax paid by the employers, is administered by a board of six trustees, all officers of the union, with an advisory committee consisting of nine hotel executives. In its first year employer contributions totaled $1,540,000 and $448,229 was paid out in benefits to workers and their families.

In a foreword to the report Jay Rubin, president of the union and chairman of the board of trustees of the insurance fund, said it had become a stabilizing force in the hotel industry and had served to eliminate "cut-throat" competition, to improve and raise the standard of service to the public.

Included among the benefits paid out through the fund were $139,000 in life insurance, $176,888 in hospitalization, $10,000 in payments for accidental death and dismemberment, and $123,420 in weekly accident and sickness benefits. Of these receiving hospitalization, 55 percent were members, 19 percent were wives or husbands of members, and 17 percent were children of members.

"We have one objective," Mr. Green said, "and that is to organize the unorganized workers of the South. When the next year we hope and expect to enroll 2 million additional members in the AFL.

"By organizing the unorganized workers and increasing their wage standards, the unions will help increase purchasing power. When the people of the South have more money, then the farmers and the factories of the South will be able to sell what they produce and everybody gains."

Mr. Green emphasized that the AFL political activities in the South are entirely non-partisan. It has always been the policy of the AFL, he said, to support the friends of labor, without regard to their political affiliation.

Turning to the four delegates who accompanied Mr. Green to Asheville, Mr. Cooke first interviewed Walter Lowry, vice president of Ministers of the Boilermakers. Lowry, who lost an eye while with the Army in the Pacific, explained that before the war the average boilermaker's wage was 95 cents an hour and top mechanics 75 cents. Under the union scale these levels were raised to 81 cents for laborers and $1.48 for top mechanics.

Lowry expressed deep pleasure in the fact that more and more Southern workers are joining the union now, many of whom showed little interest in union activities before the war. This he attributed largely to their discovery in the days after the war of their power.

Mrs. Ida Lee Merchant of Mobile, representing the United Garment Workers and an organizer in Tennessee, said the pre-union wage scale in hosiery mills was 32½ cents an hour for 50 or 60 hours a week. Under the union scale she said, the workers receive $35 to $55 a week and more for a 40-hour week, time and a half for overtime, maternity leave, seniority rights and vacation pay.

James Hampton, Negro delegate for the Bookcarriers, said the premium pay scale of 40 to 50 cents an hour was boosted to 75 cents to $1 under union contracts. He stressed that the union is a great job for the Negro workers of the South," by providing increased wages which permit better education for the children and better homes.

C. O. Bledsoe, of Florida, speaking for the Office Workers' Union, said his organization has been highly successful in obtaining wage increases for white collar workers in the areas in which they have organized.

AFL Council Demands Probe Of Basic Causes of Strikes

Anti-Strike Bills Assailed

Washington, D. C.—Text of the statement issued by the AFL Executive Council on anti-strike legislation follows:

The Executive Council calls upon the United States Senate to refrain from enacting anti-strike legislation of any kind. Such legislation, drafted in the interest of management against specific work stoppages, could only result in economic disaster when given general application.

We wish to emphasize the fact that millions of members of American Federation of Labor unions have negotiated new contracts since the war ended by peaceful collective bargaining with employers and without any interruption of production. They are bound in honor by any attempt to penalize them with drastic legislative curbs. It is also easily demonstrable that the workers who have engaged in strikes since V-J Day were forced to do so because of the unreasonable attitude of their employers left them no other reasonable recourse for redressing their grievances.

After careful consideration, we have come to the conclusion that not a single one of the restrictive measures proposed to Congress as a cure against strikes is constitutional or workable.

We condemn the Case Bill specifically as the worst anti-labor measure ever adopted by either branch of Congress. It would wreck labor relations throughout American industry and precipitate chaotic conditions. We urge the Senate to reject this measure in toto.

The Executive Council is convinced that the wisest course for the Senate to pursue is to adopt the Kilgore resolution which calls for an investigation by the Senate Education and Labor Committee "to examine the basic causes of labor-management disputes and the basic economic and other factors, including governmental policies and decisions affecting free collective bargaining."

We do not see how any legislative body can enact new laws governing such involved and explosive matters as labor-management relations without having the essential information which such an inquiry would provide, the Council declared.

Careful examination of all the factors involved in current labor troubles, the Council emphasized, would reveal postwar disputes are due in large part to the failure of Congress and the Government to "provide for reconversion for human needs."

The inquiry we should disclose, the Council held, that labor was "fully justified" in seeking pay increases to offset higher living costs because such adjustments were forbidden during the war. It lashed out sharply, also, at general political opportunists attacking free collective bargaining" and governmental policies which have "whittled away the purchasing power of the wage dollar."

Regarding moves to wipe out the OPA, which is due to expire June 30, 1946, the Council expressed grave concern at the "alarmingly increased pace" in the rise in living costs.

"Inflation is here. It is idle to talk about preventing it," the Council declared. "Our problem now is to keep it within bounds and check what threatens to be a runaway. This is an issue of direct and vital concern to every American worker and his family."

Under present conditions, the Council said, it saw no other alternative than continuation of the OPA for another year, though it was frank to admit it does not like "OPA or any other form of Government control over the Nation's economy." It would vigorously oppose any permanent extension of price control, the group asserted. The widespread opposition of the black market was cited specifically as a blot on the OPA record "which must be promptly removed."

Despite its shortcomings, however, the Council insisted that only by continuation of OPA at this time can prices be held in check "until abundant supplies make it possible for the full forces of competition to protect the consumer."

OPA Must Be Extended

Washington, D. C.—Text of statement by the AFL Executive Council on OPA extension follows:

The cost of living, which has been climbing steadily since 1940, is now mounting skyward at an alarmingly increased pace. Official estimates of the rise fail to give even a faint approximation of the actual problem. Every housewife is familiar with the fantastic rise in prices. Government experts admit as much. Even food staples keep going higher. Articles in short supply can be purchased only from the counter at black market prices. Low-priced clothing has disappeared from the shelves. Artificial shortages are created to jack up prices.

The situation speaks for itself. Inflation is here. It is idle to talk any longer about preventing it. Our problem now is to keep it within bounds and check what threatens to be a runaway.

This is an issue of direct and vital concern to every American worker and his family. Wages can never keep up with prices in a runaway race. Every time that prices in a free-for-all scramble go up, there is a shrinking in the buying power of his earnings shrinks, the worker becomes unable to buy what he and his family need. The inevitable result will be a dangerous decline in the standard of living of American workers. Even those who profiteer from OPA violations will be worse off than they are now.

Economists welcome "a little bit" of inflation as the forerunner of an industrial boom. But the tragic consequence of such a boom will be a disastrous postwar bust.

Under the circumstances, the Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor sees no other alternative than the continuation of OPA for another year. We do not like OPA or any other form of Government control over the nation's economy. We would vigorously oppose the imposition of price control as a permanent Government fixture. But until the existing acute shortages of basic commodities are alleviated, the OPA offers the only available brake against uncontrolled inflation.

The Executive Council, therefore, commends the action of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee in approving a year's extension of OPA. We now call upon the Senate to reject crippling amendments which would wreck price control in the coming year.

In reaching these conclusions, the Executive Council wishes to emphasize that it regards the administration of OPA as glaringly unsatisfactory. The widespread operations of the black market are a blot on the record of OPA which must be promptly erased. On the other hand, the OPA has shown commendable zeal in some cases in acting upon meritorious requests for price relief by legitimate business. If price control is going to be retained—and circumvented, the OPA will become worse than useless.

Labor insists that prices be kept in check until abundant supplies make it possible for the natural forces of competition to protect the consumer. We demand that the black market be crushed. We call upon the Senate to see to it that fair treatment is accorded under its price regulations to the nation's producers, merchants and the consuming public.

CENSUS BUREAU REPORTS BRIGHTEST WORK PICTURE

Washington, D. C.—The brightest picture since the end of the war was sketched in the U. S. Census Bureau employment estimates for April.

Bureau experts found unemployment for the first time since V-J Day, "together with total employment "at the highest level ever recorded for April," and noted in the report.

Job-seekers were estimated at 5,000,000, a drop of 1,000,000 since March, and total employment was placed at 54,300,000, an increase of 1,500,000 over March.

MARGINOT JOINS LABEL TRADES

Washington, D. C.—Rudolph N. Marginot has been appointed director of school of Electrical Workers of America, has become associated with the Union Label Trades Department of the AFL, I. M. Ornburn, secretary-treasurer of the department, announced. Until November he will be engaged in preparations for the Union Label and Service Trades Week to be held in St. Louis, after which he will devote his full time to the general activities of the department.

HERZOG SEES NO NEED FOR REVISING WAGNER ACT

Niagara Falls, N. Y.—The National Labor Relations Act, popularly known as the Wagner Act, does not require any revision, Paul M. Herzog, chairman of the NLRB, told an area conference here. Herzog declared that while "some may see need for legislation to supplement it," the act has been "a real boon to labor indeed." Current wage and other labor troubles do not involve the Wagner Act, he said.

JOBS IN BUILDING FIELD RISE 200,000 IN APRIL

Washington, D. C.—Employment in the construction field rose 200,000 in April to a total of 1,215,000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Department, reported. Nearly half of the increase represented additional workers on home building.

Expenditures for construction, including minor building repairs, amounted to $863,000,000 in April, 11% percent above the previous month. Home construction alone increased $54,000,000 during the month, reaching a total of $350,000,000.

U. S. Workers Due For 14% Increase

Washington, D. C.—Swift approval is expected of the Senate-House compromise agreement on legislation giving Government workers a flat 14 percent wage increase and ceiling for drastic reduction of Government personnel within the next year.

The conference report provides a $250 annual minimum pay boost for Government employes in the lowest brackets. The guarantee, however, would not apply to laborers and other custodial employes getting less than $1,500 a year.

The conferees also added to a personnel ceiling amendment which seeks to bring federal employment down to 1,019,570 persons by July 1, 1947. At present there are approximately 2,400,000 Government employes.

The wage increase provision of the bill affects approximately 1,900,000 Government employes.

Calls On Senate To Extend OPA Another Year To Check Price Runaway

Washington, D. C.—Sharp condemnation of efforts to drive anti-strike legislation through Congress was voiced by the AFL Executive Council in session here, coupled with strong support of the Kilgore resolution for a thorough Senate study of the causes of labor disputes.

At the same time the Council called upon the Senate for extension of the OPA for another year, but it demanded improvement of administration of OPA which has been "glaringly unsatisfactory."

Lashing out strongly at foes of labor who are pressing for hasty enactment of anti-strike legislation in "in the spirit of vengeance," the Council pointed to millions of members of the AFL whose unions have negotiated new contracts by peaceful collective bargaining since the war ended without any interruption of production.

The members of these unions, the Council declared, "are bound in resent any attempt to penalize them with drastic legislative curbs." None of the restrictive labor measures proposed in Congress, the Council asserted after careful study, "is constitutional or workable."

The "wisest course" at this time, the Council declared, would be passage of the Kilgore resolution which calls upon the Senate Education and Labor Committee to make a detailed study of the basic causes of labor-management disputes, "and the basic economic and other factors, including governmental policies and decisions affecting free collective bargaining."

"We do not see how any legislative body can enact new laws governing such involved and explosive matters as labor-management relations without having the essential information" which such an inquiry would provide, the Council declared.

Careful examination of all the factors involved in current labor troubles, the Council emphasized, would reveal postwar disputes are due in large part to the failure of Congress and the Government to "provide for reconversion for human needs."

The inquiry we should disclose, the Council held, that labor was "fully justified" in seeking pay increases to offset higher living costs because such adjustments were forbidden during the war. It lashed out sharply, also, at general political opportunists attacking free collective bargaining" and governmental policies which have "whittled away the purchasing power of the wage dollar."

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Under present conditions, the Council said, it saw no other alternative than continuation of the OPA for another year, though it was frank to admit it does not like "OPA or any other form of Government control over the Nation's economy." It would vigorously oppose any permanent extension of price control, the group asserted. The widespread opposition of the black market was cited specifically as a blot on the OPA record "which must be promptly removed."

Despite its shortcomings, however, the Council insisted that only by continuation of OPA at this time can prices be held in check "until abundant supplies make it possible for the full forces of competition to protect the consumer."